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OSHA To Publicize Companies' Workplace Injuries Through Severe Injury Report Dashboard

Effective September 4, 2024, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is now publicizing and making available the information from employers' severe injury reports for anyone to evaluate. According to OSHA's press release, the online interactive dashboard provides "users the ability to search its severe injury report database and view trends related to workplace injuries occurring in states covered by federal OSHA."

Since January 2015, OSHA has required employers to report work-related severe injuries, defined as an "in-patient hospitalization of one or more employees or an employee's amputation or an employee's loss of an eye." In the event of such injury, the employer must report to OSHA within 24 hours of the incident. Employers can use one of three reporting options: calling the OSHA office nearest to the incident, calling OSHA's toll-free central telephone number, 1-800-321-OSHA (1-800-321-6742), or electronic submission via the agency's Serious Event Online Reporting Form.

The Severe Injury Report (SIR) Dashboard currently covers work-related injuries occurring between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2023. Employers, workers, and the public, however, should take caution with several limitations in the data set. As OSHA itself acknowledges, the SIR Dashboard only covers a subset of workers in the United States because the data specifically excludes any information from OSHA State Plan States. Consequently, workers in one of the 22 State Plan states are not captured by this data. The SIR Dashboard also does not include any information on work-related fatalities investigated by OSHA, publicized by the agency through another online portal capturing system.

OSHA believes disseminating the severe injury reports to the public will help prevent accidents by allowing employers and workers to review the information to identify trends and root causes. Given limitations of the data and the potential for errors, it is uncertain whether users may make inaccurate assumptions or conclusions. To that end, businesses will want to periodically review the SIR Dashboard to ensure that any information is accurately presented regarding severe work-related injuries at their jobsites. Employers should also carefully consider the information conveyed at the time of reporting to ensure factual accuracy. For example, an employee visit to an Emergency Room for observation or treatment does not constitute formal in-patient admission to a hospital that requires reporting.

Key Takeaways

- Companies with work-related injuries involving an in-patient hospitalization, amputation, or the loss of an eye must report those injuries within 24 hours to OSHA.
- OSHA is now publicizing the information from these severe injury reports on its SIR Dashboard.

This blog post was drafted by Andrew Brought, an attorney in the Kansas City, Missouri office of Spencer Fane. For more information, visit www.spencerfane.com.

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